

9 September 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Third Meeting of Team B on Soviet Strategic Policies and Objectives - 8 September 1976

1. Attendees included:

Richard Pipes, team leader
General Daniel Graham
William Van Cleave
General John Vogt
General Jasper Welch
Thomas Wolfe
Paul Wolfowitz

2. Dr. Pipes reported on his meeting with Robert Galvin, who chairs the PFIAB subcommittee that is in charge of the Competitive Analysis experiment. Pipes gave Galvin a copy of his memo, "Purpose, Scope, and Plan of Team "B" Report" and told him that he believed sections IV and VI "The Soviet Strategic Threat, 1976-85", will be the heart of the Team report.

3. Galvin told Pipes that the length of the Team B report presents no problem to the members of PFIAB. It was Galvin's opinion that the report would be discussed at PFIAB's meeting in December. He also agreed with the two basic purposes of the Team B report and said that in its report the Team could make recommendations for improving the NIE. Galvin also indicated that the Team can consider the question of domestic political pressure on the NIE process. The Team members agreed that this was a factor worth considering but agreed with Pipes' comment that it would have to be handled with caution.

4. Van Cleave distributed a draft on ASW and noted that it had been reviewed by [redacted] Commenting on the report, Welch said that the Team must be aware of the tendency to mirror-image on capabilities, intentions and scenarios. He also noted that the possibility of short term deployment of systems might be considered. Welch said that short term deployment can be effective and can usually be done quickly and at far less cost than long-term deployment.

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5. Graham distributed a draft on Civil Defense and suggested that other drafts might follow his format: Discussion of NIE position, Presentation of the evidence, Analysis/Estimate, Forecast. Pipes and Vogt liked the format and suggested that it be tried in other drafts. Vogt felt that one of his reports on C & C and hardening might be added to Graham's CD draft. Pipes agreed that some elements of Vogt's report might be incorporated into Graham's but felt that it should remain a separate report.

Pipes and Vogt also noted that US observers frequently refuse to take the Soviets at their word even when they repeatedly and publicly take the same position.

6. Vogt read his draft on C & C and hardening. (Copies will be available to team members on 9 September.) Pipes repeated his belief that Vogt's C & C report should not be fused with Graham's CD report. In response to a question from Wolfe, Vogt said that there is no disagreement over hardening figures in the intelligence community. There seemed to be general agreement that the Soviet C & C and hardening effort indicate that the Soviets are going beyond mutual deference and are determined to survive and win in the event of war. Pipes said that Soviet publications frequently speak of World War III in terms of when, rather than if.

7. Vogt read his draft on the Backfire. (Copies will be available to team members on 9 Sept.) Vogt said the Backfire is clearly a strategic weapon and noted that many of those who reject this position classify the US F-111 as strategic even though its unrefueled radius is lower than the lowest estimated radius for the Backfire.

Vogt noted that the Soviets are determined to get a high assurance factor and are willing to increase the number of strategic weapons. They believe the number of weapons available is very important. He added that while the US tends to consolidate and thus reduce the number of targets the Soviets tend to disperse thus increasing the number of targets.

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Commenting on the current controversy over the Backfire range, Graham noted that it was similar to an earlier conflict over the Badger. [REDACTED]

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The Soviets can make the conversions necessary to make the Backfire strategic faster than the US can prepare defenses against it. Vogt said the Soviets could either build a fleet of tankers or convert existing aircraft and train crews in inflight refueling to make the Backfire strategic. [REDACTED]

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Pipes commented that the NIE tends to hedge on the Backfire in rejecting a strategic role for the Backfire but noting that it could be strategic if certain things were done.

8. Welch indicated that his draft on anti-satellite testing was incomplete. He said the Soviets have a semi-operational anti-satellite system capable of hitting targets in low orbit but nothing to take care of future satellite systems (ten year time frame).

Wolfowitz noted that the Soviets have not taken a clear position on what constitutes "national means of verification".

Pipes felt that this subject could be dropped if no threat is apparent to the team members. Graham disagreed. Wolfowitz and Graham agreed that the Soviets tend to take a more skeptical view of US-Soviet relations than the US does.

Graham said the Soviets do not rule out war as an extension of politics. They are building forces to fight a war and get deterrence as a fringe benefit. Vogt disagreed. He said that the Soviets would rather avoid war and have built forces so strong that the US will be reluctant to use strategic nuclear weapons to defend territory. Vogt said the size of the strategic forces on both sides reduces the credibility of the US deterrence. He added that the Soviets are ready to use superior conventional forces to take Europe because the US nuclear deterrence will not readily be used.

Pipes said if the Soviets achieve nuclear superiority they can then make use of their superiority in conventional forces.

9. Vogt read a report on Mobile ICBMs (SS 16 & SS 20). (Copies will be available to Team members on 9 September.)

Vogt noted that the NIE does not cover the question of convertibility of these systems. Wolfe asked why the Soviets are making the systems convertible. Is it to ensure survivability or to multiply the number of weapons they can put on target? Wolfe said that he believed it is difficult to determine Soviet motives.

Graham responded that survivability of multiple systems depends on the intelligence ability of the other side. He said that the evidence suggests it is a matter of numbers, now or in the future, rather than survivability.

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11. Van Cleave distributed a report on Depressed Trajectory.

Graham commented that it is important not to drive intelligence to prove the negative. He said the community could reasonably expect to detect evidence of Soviet testing of depressed trajectory systems.

Pipes said that the NIE tends to draw firm conclusions from inadequate data and this may be an example.

Welch said that this capability can be developed quickly so the point is how the NIE handles the question.

Vogt asked why the Soviets would not opt for this capability. Welch said this is mysterious. Wolfowitz said that part of the Soviet philosophy is to conceal important capabilities. Welch countered that in this case the Soviets have little to gain by concealment. Graham said that analysts still tend to work on the basis of clear US superiority which no longer exists.

12. Graham distributed a report on Soviet defense spending. Graham said he intends to add new evidence on total Soviet expenditures for defense. Pipes questioned the value and purpose of computing the cost of Soviet defense expenditures. Others agreed with Pipes' statement but noted that it had originated under McNamara and had to be done to meet his demands. This was the period of the whiz-kids and great concern over cost-effectiveness, according to Graham.

It was noted that while there is competition for defense rubles within the military there is no effective competition from the civilian sector for resources. Pipes said the distinction between civilian and war expenditures does not exist in Soviet society. Even Soviet culture is USO, i.e., morale boosting. The Soviets do not consider the military a social overhead but rather a social benefit.

13. Pipes closed the meeting at 1645 and said the reports not discussed at this meeting would be considered at the meeting on 15 September. He also reminded the members that an informal conference with some members of the other two "B" teams was scheduled for 9 September at 1 P.M.

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